



NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE

1701 K Street, NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20006
PHONE (202) 835-3323 FAX (202) 835-0747 www.nclnet.org

April 13, 2009

The Honorable Anna Gomez
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB)
U.S. Department of Commerce / NTIA
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Gomez:

Founded in 1899, the National Consumers League (NCL) is the nation's oldest consumer organization. Our mission of protecting and promoting social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad is more relevant than ever in this time of economic turmoil and job uncertainty. To this end, we join with our colleagues like the Communications Workers of America (CWA) in applauding the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which includes more than \$7 billion for broadband deployment.

For tens of millions of American consumers, broadband is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Unfortunately, minority, senior and low-income communities have been disproportionately affected by the widening digital divide. For these vulnerable populations, broadband provides an essential link to community resources, health care programs, and educational opportunities. Action to address the digital divide is especially needed today. Millions of Americans have lost their jobs due to the economic crisis. For them, access to broadband is essential in the search for a new job and financial security.

With this in mind, NCL strongly encourages the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to quickly, efficiently, and transparently disperse the funding from the stimulus to state and local leaders to begin to implement the broadband goals of ARRA. It is also imperative to get the mapping process underway quickly



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so communities can accurately identify unserved and underserved areas and direct resources.

Widely available, affordable access to broadband for America's consumers is needed now more than ever. President Obama and Congressional leaders rightly recognized the important role that broadband plays in driving America's economic recovery and empowering its citizens. We urge you to respond to this challenge by putting the broadband stimulus funds to work as soon as possible.

Thank you for providing NCL with this opportunity and we look forward to working with you in the coming months as this program progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sally Greenberg'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sally Greenberg
Executive Director
National Consumers League